

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 995

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OREP (SOLARZ, STEPHEN)

SUBJECT: VISIT OF CODEL SOLARZ TO JORDAN

1. SUMMARY: REPRESENTATIVE SOLARZ SPENT ACTIVE TWO DAYS IN JORDAN. IN ADDITION TO ROUND OF CALLS ON LOCAL DIGNITARIES (INCLUDING AUDIENCE WITH KING HUSSEIN), REPRESENTATIVE SOLARZ PRESENTED LECTURE AT USIS CENTER, VISITED REFUGEE CAMP, ATTENDED DINNER IN HIS HONOR AT AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE, AND MET INFORMALLY WITH UNIVERSITY OF JORDAN PROFESSORS. THROUGHOUT VISIT, HE PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGED REPRESENTING LARGEST JEWISH CONSTITUENCY IN US AND THAT HIS VISIT TO ARAB COUNTRIES INTENDED TO INCREASE HIS KNOWLEDGE OF MIDEAST IN PURSUIT OF DURABLE PEACE. END SUMMARY.

2. REP STEPHEN SOLARZ OF NEW YORK AND MEMBER, FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, SPENT ACTIVE TWO DAYS AND NIGHTS IN JORDAN, COMBINING CALLS ON LOCAL DIGNITARIES WITH EMBASSY BRIEFINGS AND INFORMAL SESSIONS WITH JORDANIAN CITIZENRY. FORMAL INTERVIEWS INCLUDED AUDIENCE WITH KING HUSSEIN (REPORTED BY SEPTTEL) AND CALLS ON MININFO SALAH ABU ZAYD AND FORMER ROYAL DIWAN CHIEF AND PRESENT PRES. OF SENATE BAHJAT TALHOUNI. IN ADDITION, REP SOLARZ MADE HIMSELF AVAILABLE FOR INFORMAL SESSIONS WITH JORDAN

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UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS. IN HIS CONVERSATIONS, HE IN-

DICATED THAT HE REPRESENTED IN CONGRESS LARGEST JEWISH CONSTITUENCY IN US AND THAT HE HAD COME TO JORDAN TO LISTEN TO JORDANIAN AND PALESTINIAN CONCERNS, A CLAIM HE BACKED UP BY TAKING EXTENSIVE NOTES DURING EACH INTERVIEW.

3. EVENING OF FEB 4, REP SOLARZ GAVE HALF-HOUR LECTURE ON AMERICAN DOMESTIC POLITICAL SCENE, BEFORE HAND-PICKED AUDIENCE CONSISTING OF PROMINENT LOCAL DIGNITARIES AND INTELLECTUALS. QUESTION-AND-ANSWER SESSION FOLLOWING LECTURE CONCENTRATED ENTIRELY ON US MIDDLE EAST POLICY AND CONSTITUTED ONE OF MOST SPIRITED EVENINGS USIS MAY SEE FOR LONG TIME. REP SOLARZ EVOKED HEATED RESPONSE FROM SOME IN AUDIENCE PARTICULARLY ON PREDICTABLY CONTENTIOUS ISSUES REGARDING US SUPPORT OF ISRAEL AND QUESTION OF REFUGEE RETURN.

4. FEB 6 ISSUE OF LOCAL DAILY AD-DUSTOUR PRINTED EDITORIAL STRONGLY CRITICAL OF REP SOLARZ' REMARKS. ("THE VISITING CONGRESSMAN SPOKE ABOUT HIS COUNTRY'S MORAL OBLIGATION TO KEEP ISRAEL A DEMOCRATIC STATE TO PROTECT US INTERESTS AND TO PREVENT COMMUNIST INFILTRATION INTO THE AREA. THE AUDIENCE OBJECTED TO SUCH STATEMENTS AND ASKED HIM QUESTIONS, TO WHICH HE REPLIED...THE PROBLEM OF REFUGEES COULD HAVE BEEN SOLVED LONG AGO BY ABSORPTION BY THE ARAB COUNTRIES. HE NOTED THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR THE ARABS TO ADMIT REALITY BY RECOGNIZING ISRAEL...HE BOASTED THAT HE COMES FROM A PLACE WHERE THERE ARE MORE JEWS THAN IN JERUSALEM. HE ADDED THAT THE JEWISH LEADERS WITH WHOM HE HAD MET HAD EXPRESSED A DESIRE FOR PEACE...HE AVOIDED ANSWERING A QUESTION CONCERNING MORAL OBLIGATIONS TOWARDS THE ARAB REFUGEES BY NOTING THAT THE JEWISH IMMIGRANTS FROM THE ARAB COUNTRIES HAD BEEN ABSORBED BY ISRAEL, WHILE THE ARAB COUNTRIES DID NOT ABSORB THE PALESTINAIANS.")

5. FEB 6, REP SOLARZ PAID VISIT TO MARQA UNRWA REFUGEE CAMP FOR GIVE-AND-TAKE SESSION WITH CAMP
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DIGNITARIES. (CAMP IS INHABITED MOSTLY BY REFUGEES DISPLACED IN 1967.) NOTING HIS CONSTITUENCY, HE ASKED THAT HE CAME TO LISTEN, AND RESULTING LITANY OF REFUGEE WOES WAS RECITED IN GOOD-NATURED VEIN, WITH MAIN THEME BEING FORCED EVICTION FROM FORMER HOMES.
PICKERING

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